Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2016/08/08 : CIA-RDP79T00936A010600140001-4

The President's Daily Brief

17 April 1972

46

~~*Top Secret*~~

25X1

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2016/08/08 : CIA-RDP79T00936A010600140001-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2016/08/08 : CIA-RDP79T00936A010600140001-4

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

17 April 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Initial Soviet and Chinese reactions to the bombings of Hanoi and Haiphong reflect an apparent desire not to antagonize the US. *(Page 1)*

In South Vietnam, meanwhile, fighting was heavy over the weekend. *(Page 3)*

Turkish Prime Minister Erim's resignation may be announced today. *(Page 4)*

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2016/08/08 : CIA-RDP79T00936A010600140001-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2016/08/08 : CIA-RDP79T00936A010600140001-4

USSR - CHINA - NORTH VIETNAM

Moscow has given its population only scant news of the US air strikes on Hanoi and Haiphong. Publicly, the Soviets have not acknowledged damage to their ships at Haiphong, even though they announced--without elaboration--that the foreign ministry had protested the bombings to the US Embassy. Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Kovalev indeed had presented a protest to Ambassador Beam yesterday that focused on the damage done to four Soviet ships at Haiphong. The demarche characterized the raids on Haiphong as a flagrant violation of international law and freedom of shipping. It referred to the "possible dangerous consequences" of the bombing and insisted that the US prevent "similar provocations" in the future.

The protest failed to mention the strikes on Hanoi or anywhere else in North Vietnam. Its concentration on the damage to Soviet ships, its failure to mention any injury to Soviet personnel, and its delivery at the relatively low level of deputy foreign minister indicates the Soviets did not want to overstress the implications of the air strikes on US-Soviet relations.

At roughly the same time Kovalev presented the protest, TASS issued a statement saying that "leading circles" in the USSR are closely following the situation in Vietnam. The TASS release made no mention of damage to Soviet ships and drew no connection between the raids and US-Soviet relations. Maintaining Moscow's recent public reticence about commitments to North Vietnam, the TASS statement merely noted that the USSR does its international duty by giving "necessary aid and support to all patriots of Indochina."

Chinese reaction thus far has been restrained; regular Peking broadcasts have all but ignored the air strikes. Premier Chou En-lai, according to the New China News Agency, met yesterday evening with a representative of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam and condemned "Washington's old track of escalation" but mentioned the bombings only in passing and without suggesting that the raids posed a threat to China or its interests.

Chou's remarks are little more than a compendium of clichés used by the Chinese over the past year to describe the war.

(continued)

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2016/08/08 : CIA-RDP79T00936A010600140001-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2016/08/08 : CIA-RDP79T00936A010600140001-4

The NCNA account makes no mention of Chinese assistance, of President Nixon, or of the damage to the Soviet ships.

Hanoi's propagandists are trying to capitalize on the air strikes, emphasizing the intensity of the attacks on civilian areas. In an effort to bolster morale, they claimed the downing of 15 US jets, including a B-52. The party and government also issued a joint appeal to the population to intensify the fight yesterday. The document expressed the belief that Hanoi's "friends in the world" would strongly condemn "in time" the US.

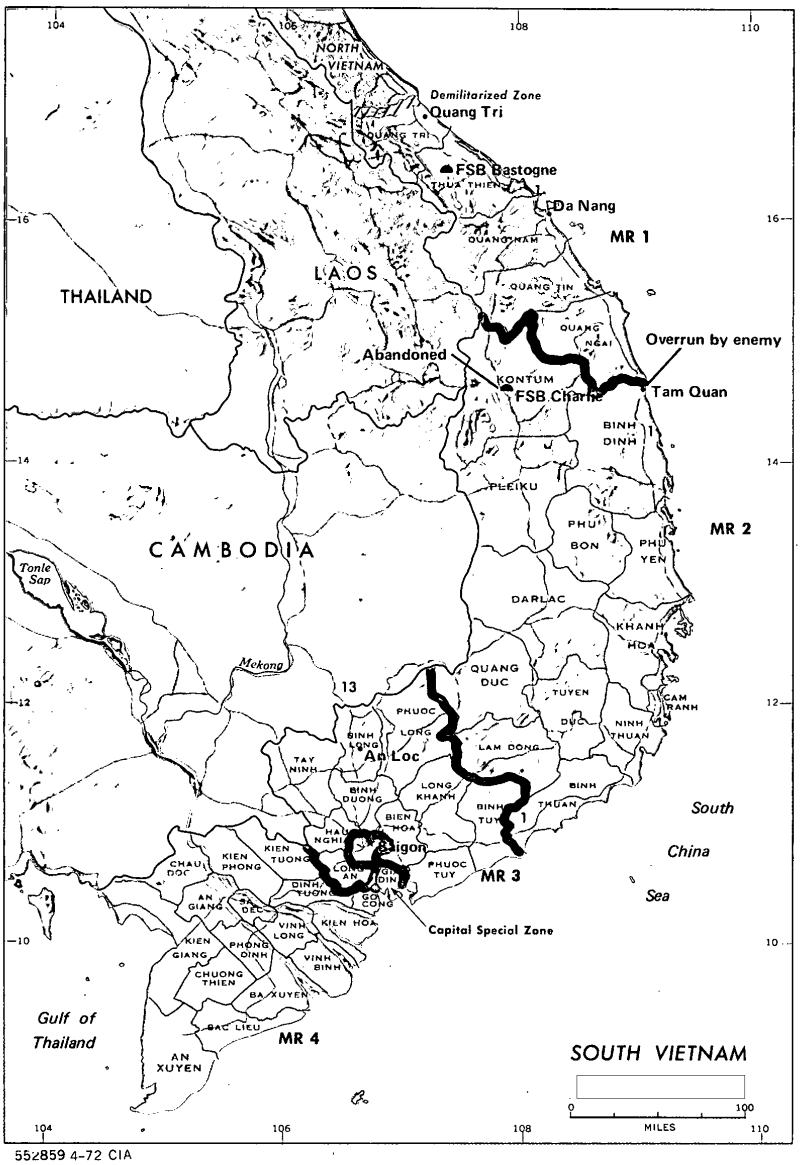
This last appears to be yet another call for greater support from the USSR and China. In this connection, the North Vietnamese have been playing up the Soviet aspect of the raids on Haiphong, publicizing the damage to a Soviet ship and claiming that one of its officers had been wounded.

25X1

In Paris yesterday, Xuan Thuy said that the Communists would "reconsider" the question of resuming the talks. His statement is the closest the Vietnamese Communists have ever come to a threat to break off the talks. Late press reports indicate that Xuan Thuy has scheduled a news conference for today.

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2016/08/08 : CIA-RDP79T00936A010600140001-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2016/08/08 : CIA-RDP79T00936A010600140001-4



552859 4-72 CIA

25X1

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2016/08/08 : CIA-RDP79T00936A010600140001-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2016/08/08 : CIA-RDP79T00936A010600140001-4

SOUTH VIETNAM

Heavy fighting took place along the major battlefronts over the weekend. Government troops lost a fire support base in Kontum that had been under severe pressure for several days, and Tam Quan, a district headquarters in coastal Binh Dinh Province, was overrun. Airlifted reinforcements reached the besieged city of An Loc, however, and helped fend off repeated tank and infantry attacks by the North Vietnamese. At last report, the South Vietnamese held most of the city.

The South Vietnamese 3rd Division, which took substantial losses in Quang Tri Province during the opening days of the offensive, has begun limited counterattacks against the enemy. In the Hue area, however, North Vietnamese forces maintained pressure against South Vietnamese troops at Fire Support Base Bastogne, again preventing resupply of the base. The enemy also carried out rocket and mortar attacks against Da Nang and several other coastal towns and bases as far south as Khanh Hoa Province.

Local Viet Cong forces appear to be playing a more important role in the offensive. Such forces are credited with the destruction of the district capital in Binh Dinh, and they inflicted serious losses on government regional forces in other clashes in that province.

There is continuing evidence that heavy fighting is coming to many areas in the days ahead. On the Quang Tri front, intercepts indicate that the North Vietnamese are having problems getting organized because of allied air and ground operations, but they also appear determined to resume offensive thrusts in the near future. Although enemy pressure against An Loc has eased, prisoners and captured documents show that the North Vietnamese 7th Division has left Cambodia to join the battle. Other enemy units are getting into the battle for Route 13, the main access road to An Loc from the Saigon area. Farther south, two enemy regiments are attempting to move across the border into the Mekong Delta, but have been thwarted thus far by South Vietnamese forces operating in Cambodia.

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2016/08/08 : CIA-RDP79T00936A010600140001-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2016/08/08 : CIA-RDP79T00936A010600140001-4

NOTES

Turkey: Public announcement of Prime Minister Erim's resignation is likely to come today following the end of President Podgorny's visit. Military leaders' dissatisfaction with the lack of any appreciable reform legislation lies behind Erim's departure, [redacted] but they remain reluctant to assume direct control of the government. Within a few days President Sunay will probably name as new prime minister someone who is at least nominally independent. In the meantime [redacted] Defense Minister Melen will serve on an acting basis.

25X1

25X1

25X1

Uruguay: Congress granted President Bordaberry's request for the temporary suspension of individual rights and the declaration of a limited "state of internal war" following the killing of four men by Tupamaro terrorists on Friday. Congress restricted the declaration to the zone affected by terrorism--principally the Montevideo area--and limited the duration of the measures to 30 days rather than the 90 requested by the President. The most important emergency measures give the military the main responsibility in the fight against the terrorists and authorize the extended detention of suspects without trial.

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2016/08/08 : CIA-RDP79T00936A010600140001-4

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2016/08/08 : CIA-RDP79T00936A010600140001-4

Top Secret

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2016/08/08 : CIA-RDP79T00936A010600140001-4